

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18-24, 26-28, 36, and 39 are pending. Claims 2-9, 12, 15-17, 25, 29-35, 37, and 38 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 1, 10, 13, 18, 21, 27, 36, and 39 are amended by the present amendment. As amended Claims 1, 10, 13, 18, 21, 27, 36, and 39 are supported by the original claims no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 36 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Dixon (U.S. Patent No. 5,544,431), Claims 1, 5, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Kilgore et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,343,639, hereinafter “Kilgore”); Claims 1, 5-7, 21, 22, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Hagg et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,262,433, hereinafter “Hagg”); Claims 8, 15, 16, 23, 24, 29, 31-33, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Hagg in view of Preman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,224,280, hereinafter “Preman”); and Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Hagg and Preman and further in view of Dixon. However, Claims 9-11, 13, 14, 25, 27, 28, 38, and 39 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but otherwise were indicated as including allowable subject matter if re-written in independent form.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claims 9-11, 13, 14, 25, 27, 28, 38, and 39 include allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 is amended to include the subject matter of Claim 9 and all intervening claims. Claims 13, 18, and 27 are amended to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 36 is amended to include the subject matter of Claims 37 and 38. Claim 21 is amended to include the subject matter of Claim 25. Although Claim 21 is not amended to include all the intervening claims, amended Claim 21 is believed to be

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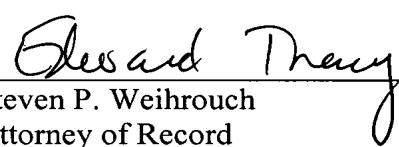
patentable, as it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references teach or suggest the subject matter of original Claim 25.

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance.

An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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